

## **DANGER SIGNS IN PREGNANCY**

Pregnancy is a physiological change in which most of our body system undergoes changes. Some of the changes are normal but some become exaggerated and must be reported as it's a signal of danger for you and your baby.

We shall be discussing these signs today, please if you notice any of these signs, please report to your Doctor ASAP (As soon as possible).

They include:

- Severe headache/frontal/recurrent headache
- Bleeding
- Reduced fetal movement
- Excessive swelling of face and ankle
- Drainage of liquor
- Abdominal pains (menstrual-like cramps)
- Sudden nausea or sickness
- Epigastric pain
- Premature onset of contraction, rupture of membranes
- Sudden swelling or oedema
- Maternal anxiety for whatever reason

### **BLEEDING**

Discharge of blood during pregnancy is abnormal and must be reported, after a woman is confirmed pregnant she is not suppose to see blood from the virginal. This is a sign of danger to the mother and baby.

Bleeding during the first trimester (first three months) could be a sign of an abortion/miscarriage.

Bleeding in the second and third trimester could be a sign of ante partum hemorrhage arising from placenta previa (low-lying placenta) or abruption placenta (abnormal detachment of a normally inserted placenta) these compromise the oxygen and nutrient your baby receives, hence posing a threat to you and your baby.

## **SEVERE HEADACHE**

Occasionally, you may experience headache which could arise from stress, this could be relieved by rest and the use of paracetamol, but persistent, uncontrollable headache could be a sign of increase in blood pressure which is among the cardinal signs of pregnancy-induced-hypertension, this must be reported so that it could be treated and controlled to avoid eclampsia (convulsion/seizure during pregnancy) this sign must be reported quickly!

## **EXCESSIVE SWELLING OF THE FACE AND ANKLE.**

Some women experience a mild degree of swelling, especially on the face and ankle, but this could be exaggerated. Swollen legs could arise from excessive standing resulting to swollen legs, this could be relieved by elevation of the legs while sitting or use of pillow while lying.

But when these persist and increase despite these measure, it should be reported as it is the second cardinal sign of pregnancy induced hypertension. The third sign is protein in urine, women whose wedding bands (rings) do not fit into their finger should be closely observed. Please if you notice this, report to your Doctor!

## **DRAINAGE OF LIQUOR**

During pregnancy, your baby is covered by a bag of water wherein he drinks, urinates and swims; this also protects your baby from undue pressure. Leakage of this water is a sign of danger to your baby. Imagine yourself in a polythene bag (e.g., sachet water) this water is where you drink from, play e.g., then suddenly it burst and all the water leaks out, you get stuck in the polythene bag, brings you in direct contact, obviously, you start suffocating and you can tell what happens next. Another example is your aquarium at home, what happens to the fishes when water is dried. This occurrence is called premature rupture of membrane (PROM) which could arise from an incompetent cervix.

## **REDUCE OR ABSENT FETAL MOVEMENT**

After 20weeks of been pregnant, it is expected that you should experience your baby's movement (kicks) it is noticed earlier in multigravida (women who have been pregnant before/more than once) averagely, your baby kick at least 10times in two hours, but for every woman, there is a particular pattern your baby moves, if you notice any change in that move, please report, a reduced movement or absent movement is a sign of fetal distress, which must be rescued as quickly as possible, although your baby can sleep for at least four hours in a day.

**N.B---Your baby can hear you even while you are pregnant, so always speak to him.**

## **LOWER ABDOMINAL PAINS (MENSTRUAL-LIKE CRAMPS)**

Most women experience pain around their waist and back owing to malpositioning and relaxation of ligament due to hormonal activities, these may be relieved by mild analgesic, obstetric physiotherapy, and proper positioning but severe abdominal pain that is not relieved by these measures including rest, is a sign of an abortion or premature labor depending on the age of your pregnancy. Also sharp pains on the side of your abdomen can be a sign of an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus)

## **HERE IS A PNEUMONIC FOR DANGER SIGNS**

**I**-irresistible/severe headaches

**S**-swollen face/ankle

**A**-absent/reduce fetal movements

**L**-lower abdominal pain

**U**-uncontrollable bleeding/painful urination

Mothers, these signs are alert signs and when any of these is noticed, please don't waste time at home, come to the clinic for clarification, as an extra minute lost could cause an irreversible damage.

Please don't seek counsel from outsiders as no two individuals are the same, what works for me, may not work for you, and always come to your Doctor, who knows your history well.

Pregnancy is a beautiful experience with an end-product of a wonderful baby, please don't destroy or cut this experience short by putting up a nonchalant attitude, observe yourself well and take every detail seriously, remember no two pregnancies are the same.